What For?

What are we set on earth for? Say, to toil—
Nor seek to leave thy tending of the vines,
For all the heat of day, till it declines,
And Death's mild curfew shall from work as soil.
God did anoint thee with his odorous oil,
To wrestle, not to reign; and he assigns
All thy tears over, like pure crystallines,
For younger fellow-workers of the soil
To wear for amulets. So others shall
Take patience, labor, to their heart and hand,
From thy hand, and thy heart, and thy brave cheer,
And God's grace fructify through thee to all.
The least flower, with a brimming cup, may stand
And share its dew-drop with another nearer.
—ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

Christian Forbearance.

BY JOHN MORGAN WHITFIELD.

We all find a great many things in this world calculated to irritate and annoy us. The best of our fellow-creatures are distinguished by foibles and follies, infirmities and vices. They often indulge in tempers, utter words and perform deeds which are opposed to our ideas of right, and very provocative of our displeasure, and if the best do this we may expect that others will do it more frequently and more flagrantly. So that offences and annoyances are sure to come to us. We may try to escape from them by entering into some wealthy mansion or some religious monastery, but even then we should find that no house can shut its doors against them, and no wealth can purchase exemption from them. Wherever we may dwell or with whomsoever we may associate, we shall be met by some things calculated to vex and pain us.

The question is, what shall we do, or how shall we comport ourselves under this wrong-doing and towards these wrong-doers? Pride says, treat such people with scorn and contempt; and revenge says, pay them back in their own coin; give them word for word and blow for blow until they are tired. But the inspired Apostle Paul says: "Don't retaliate, don't be angry, don't fume or fret, but endeavor quietly and patiently to bear with them and with their foolish and wrong ways." "Forbearing one another in love."

I do not understand the Apostle to recommend us always to let every body do what they please with us and say what they please about us without the slightest attempt at self-vindication or self-defence, as that would be out of harmony with other teachings of the New Testament, and would sometimes lead to still futher mischief and injury. The Apostle seems to be dealing with the minor offences of life and such as may be found in Christian society, and he here exhorts Christian men and women not to be easily offended and grieved with one another's infirmities and wrongs; but remembering the frailties and follies of human nature generally, to bear patiently with things which are calculated to irritate and annoy us. Forbearing one another in love.

Now why should we all endeavor to obey this apostolic injunction? Because Jesus Christ our Lord and Master wishes us to do so. A little girl being once asked how she thought the angels in Heaven conducted themselves in God's presence, replied: "I believe they just do whatever God tells them without asking any questions." No doubt the little maiden was right, and it would be well if the saints on earth often copied the angels in, Heaven in this as well as in other things. The will of God the Son is the will of God the Father and the will of Christ should be the constant rule of our lives If He wishes us to do anything, that should be reason enough for our doing it. Now it is He who is constantly exhorting His disciples to bear and forbear one with the other. True the words I have quoted were written by Paul to the Christians in Colosse. But they were written under divine inspiration, and were intended for all Christians of all countries and all ages. Hence they come to us as from Christ today. They are the words of Him who hath redeemed us by His precious blood, who hath regenerated us by His Holy Spirit, who hath enriched us by His providence and grace, and who hath made us heirs to His eternal glory. It is He who says to us, "Forbearing one another in love." This should be abundant reason why we should endeavor to cultivate this state of mind and heart. But we should do it also, because it would bring us many personal advantages and benefits. It would help to produce and manifest great nobility of character. I am well aware that there are some persons who think it manly and noble to be spirited and sharp and retaliatory, to stand up for themselves and pay other people back in their own coin and with interest, and who also think that it is unmanly and effeminate and pusillanimous to submit quietly and unmurmuringly to the sharp speeches and wrong actions of others. But they are mistaken; the very reverse of this is true. Why, a wasp can sting, a hornet can worry, an ape can scratch, a demon can retaliate, but the God of infinite wisdom, power, and love forbears with wrong speakers and wrong-doers, He is most satanic that is most resentful and retaliatory. He is most God-like, most Christ-like, who most calmly and patiently bears with the foibles, follies, infirmities and sins of those men and women around him, and the very endeavor after a spirit of forbearance, if persevered in, helps to ennoble character, because it demands and produces self-denial, self conquest; while the yielding to a fretful and retaliatory spirit exhibits weakness and leads to futher degradation of heart and life.

If, therefore, we are anxious to cultivate and exhibit true nobility and positive Christliness of character, let us no longer indulge in fretful thoughts, angry words, and resentful deeds, but aim constantly, earnestly, and prayerfully to obey the apostolic injunction. Forbearing one another in love.

Then Christian forbearance brings satisfaction to the heart. I know it has often been said that "revenge is sweet," and men have sought to find what they have called satisfaction for insults and injuries in duels fought with pistols or daggers, which have ended in mangled bodies and bleeding corpses, but nothing worthy of the term satisfaction was ever yet found in any such ways or by any such means. There may have been some momentary feeling of Satanic gratification, but this has generally been followed sooner or later by bitter regret and profound misery which darkened and saddened many years of life.

But when moved by high and holy motives, such as the good of men and the glory of God, a man patiently bears with the ignorant and vain and insolent, speaks no retaliating word, strikes no retaliating blow, but endeavors to return good for evil, he finds flowing into his soul from the throne of grace streams of hallowed peace, heavenly comfort and rich satisfaction such that none but patient, forbearing souls ever taste. If, therefore you would enjoy that peace of God which passeth all understanding, and that holy satisfaction which so enriches life, lean on Christ the whole weight of your soul and learn to bear patiently with wrong-doers.

Then Christian forbearance multiplies earthly friendships. We all have social instincts, we desire companionships, we most of us desire the friendships of the wisest and best of those around us. But the man who is ever being put out with trifles, who manifests an acrimonious and revengeful spirit, who is ever resenting supposed insults and wrongs, will repel men from him one by one until he is left alone in the world. Whereas the genial, kindly, forbearing and forgiving soul will keep his old friends and often make new ones. He will so attract the wise and good and noble of the society in which he moves as to become rich in loving, faithful friends.

But Christian forbearance when it springs from faith in and love to Christ always secures His approbation and benediction. While the man is trying his utmost to be patient and pitiful under wrong treatment of any kind, Christ smiles on him and helps him, and when the conflict is over and the victory won then the man has borne the wrong without any attempt at retaliation. Christ whispers to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant," and then pours a new supply of grace and peace and comfort into his soul, which proves an ample recompense for the struggles made. Put all these considerations together and you can not fail to see that rich personal advantages flow from the culture and exercise of Christian forbearance.—*Pulpit Treasury.*

Waiting.

BY J. B. WAMPLER.

I am *waiting* on the train and hence will occupy a part of the time in writing a brief essay on the subject of waiting. I will start with the infantile world. All are waiting, some for a very brief period of existence, when they are called away by the icy hand of death. Others are waiting to become young ladies and gentlemen and are anxiously waiting to find congenial partners, and bosom companions to smooth the rugged path of life. A very large number of the human family are laboring and toiling continually to gain wealth and worldly honor. Some are waiting and striving to reach the summit of fame and glory as politicians and warriors. Oh how many are waiting to reach the pinnacle of knowledge and science. In our imaginations we can behold them ascend the the mountain, step by step, ever looking upward and pressing onward to attain unto the height of their ambition. The husbandman is waiting patiently for early and later rain and for the harvest when he shall reap the golden grain to sustain life. The family of the day laborer is ever waiting for the return of the father at the close of day in order that they may have the necessaries of life upon which to subsist. The dear wives and families of the ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ are ever anxiously waiting and praying that God would bless their labors in the cause of Christ to the strengthening of his saints and the saving of poor sinners from sin, and that they might return to their homes in safety to greet loved ones only soon to say farewell again, and may be the ministers family is often waiting for his return expecting that he will bring with him some of the needful things for the body, as well as the blessings needful for the sustaining of our spiritual natures. In sickness oh how anxiously does the fond mother wait and wait for the return of the health of her child, and is often disappointed.

The entire human family is waiting for the solemn hour of death when husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters must be separated; this is the lot of our common humanity. After death there will be a waiting until the dawn of the great resurrection morning when the Archangel's voice shall be heard, and the trump of God shall sound at the grand and glorious period the Christian will not want to wait, but will immediately come forth to meet the Lord in the air and so be forever with the Lord. Oh happy thought! may this be our lot. During the period between death and the final resurrection the wicked will wait to receive their awful doom where waiting for deliverance will be in vain, and as eternity rolls on, anguish, remorse, sorrow and suffering, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched; but where the smoke of their torment shall ascend forever and ever.

May each sinner that reads this essay cease to wait for such a doom, and become a child of grace and wait for the coming of the Lord.

The train I am waiting for may not come on time, and might never come. But the Lord will come quickly and bring his reward with him to give every man as his work shall be. May we all be ready is my prayer.

Blanco, Pa.

Burning Words.

In making the beautiful golden inscriptions on the backs of volumes, hot type overlaid with thin leaves of gold are pressed upon them, the heat causing the gold to adhere, without which the inscription would not be permanent. It is even so in the world of thought and speech. If we would make lasting impressions upon the character of hearers or readers, we should not only impress upon them with the hand of eloquent earnestness words overlaid with golden thoughts, but they should be burning words from hearts aflame with love.—*Rev. J. R. Goodpasture.*